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THE UNIVERSITY of NEW ORLEANS



THE HEARTBEAT *of*
the CRESCENT CITY

word.



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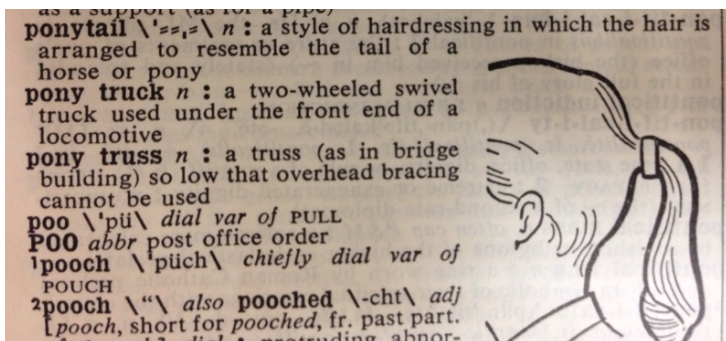
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dictionary



In the main office of the Department of English, Liberal Arts 201, you may browse through a tome of a dictionary that features lovely line drawings. It sits on a pedestal, like any good relic should.

Kris Lackey, now retired, turned the pages weekly to ensure that the text remained in the best possible shape. In his absence, TeamEnglish continues this tradition, and now, we can share it with you, too.

Follow the weekly turnings (and much more) on our Instagram: [instagram.com/fwp_at_uno](https://www.instagram.com/fwp_at_uno).

Letter from the Chair

By PETER SCHOCK


Dear Students, Faculty, Alumni, and Friends of the UNO Department of English,

I'm proud and excited to introduce you to the first issue of *Word: News and Notes from the UNO Department of English*. This academic year, we decided to change a tradition. We transformed the newsletter which our department had used for decades to report the professional accomplishments of faculty members into a magazine featuring the activity of the whole community of UNO English—faculty, students, and alumni alike. We chose to broaden the circulation of *Word*, so that the new publication would be distributed to, and its content shared with, everyone to whom this department matters.

Read the stories and notes in this issue of *Word*, and you will see that we have documented the vitality and exuberance of the largest department on the University of New Orleans campus: Distinguished Professor Niyi Osundare's current work, the transcription of a Nigerian oral epic, Associate Professor Catherine Loomis's astonishing discovery of local archival materials associated with a nineteenth-century American Shakespearean actor, the selection of Rhonda Kalifey-Aluise (MA, 2002) for reception of the Peter Jennings Award for Civic Leadership, the Louisiana Teacher of the Year Award earned by Amanda Baudot (currently enrolled in our MA Program), and the undergraduate career profile of Mark Folse, who embodies the varied and complex experience our non-traditional students bring to us, enriching and deepening our lives.

These pages display the continuing vitality of this department, communicating to every reader our unflagging persistence and our devotion to teaching and learning, writing and conducting research, collaborating with others, and serving the communities of the University and this great city where we study, work, and live. I call attention to that persistence because we persevere in spite of the fiscal constraints that challenge our commitment to academic excellence. I regularly hear from our alumni, who ask with real concern how we are faring. I answer that we are determined not just to carry on, but to strive on to sustain the quality of the academic experience they enjoyed in their UNO years.

We can't do this alone, however, and so on behalf of the Department, I ask the support of those of you who have moved on, who proudly recall your years as a student or your years of service with us. Your donation will help us lay the foundation of support our students and faculty members need and deserve, now and in future years. Enclosed in this issue is a donation request form and envelope. Finally, please let us hear from you: write to us at english@uno.edu to share information about your current activity which you would like us to publish, or to suggest stories you recommend that we feature in *Word*. We thank you for your support of the Department and its community.



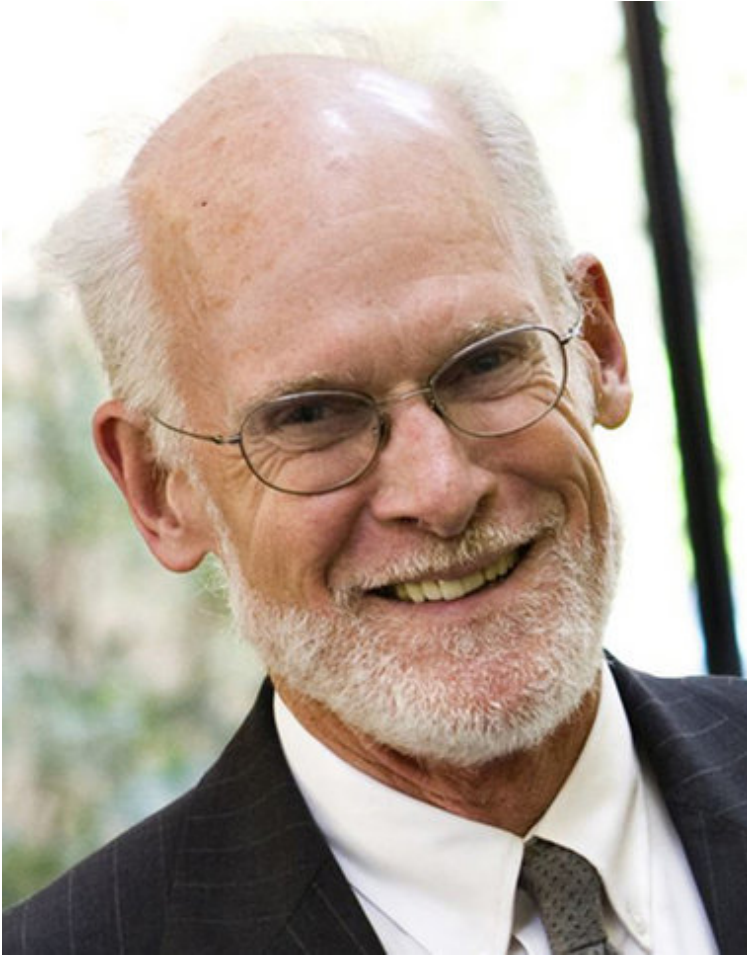
Sincerely,

Peter A. Schock
Professor and Chair

word.

Remembering John Cooke (1947-2010)

By JOHN GERY



For more than thirty years at UNO, **John Cooke** worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life and education here. An accomplished writer and critic, John was an even better editor, with a singular ability to help other writers bring out the true thought in themselves. His voracious appetite for literature, perspicacity as a reader and writer, and keen perspective as a teacher and leader were evident every day in his work: he was unstinting in his devotion to every student lucky enough to enter his classroom, yet he also had a thriving sense of humor, never far from the surface. Still, his wry humor was matched, if not surpassed, by his abiding commitment to be fair, to treat students and colleagues alike with implicit respect for each individual's character.

In addition to his impressive achievements at UNO and in academia, John devoted many hours outside UNO to projects that further demonstrated his generous character.

Among other efforts, he initiated a volunteer tutoring program for underserved New Orleans schoolchildren, was active in his church, and spent years visiting Angola Prison on a regular basis to work with prisoners there; he even mentored one prisoner to develop, write, revise, and publish a book, *A Life Behind Bars* (now used in community efforts to help deter crime among young people at risk), yet typical of John, he took no credit for making that book happen. At the time of his death, he was also actively volunteering for the Louisiana SPCA.

Despite the plethora of his activities, both professional and local, John was foremost a family man, ever attentive to his two children, Maggie and Andrew, from their births through their schooling, professional careers, and personal relationships, as well as to his wife Jan, his stepson Kent, and his extended family. Yet John never flinched in aiding friends, too, especially those in crisis. He was as ready to bail out a friend from jail as to visit another in the hospital.

Besides playing the saxophone, which he took up after age forty, John became an expert on jazz history. Among his other talents, he could describe a sax player's unique style with panache, coming from his deep feel for the syncopation of life which jazz uniquely expresses. Despite his strength and constancy for those he loved, John had an offbeat in his soul that kept him going. With his death, the world around John Cooke has become a different place—

1157—Today Was a Good Day

By ERICA ROSTEDT

Today was a good day. I left my classroom smiling, beaming even. I felt refreshed, uplifted as I found my way back to the office I share with eight other teaching assistants. Today was a good day.

I am still figuring out who I am as a teacher, but I've already found one thing that keeps me going: the good days. Because there are a lot of bad days.

When I was an undergrad twelve years ago, I had a professor named Kimberly. She had the type of PhD young students look up to with awe: she had the Yales, the NYUs, the dissertations, the alarmingly detailed grasp of Artaud's body of theatrical work. But she shied away from professional titles. So, we called her Kimberly. She was lovely, petite, and eccentric. Her hair was dark and curly, haphazardly pulled back in some sort of bun held together precariously with pens or pencils. She always wore black military-style boots, some sort of long skirt, and a variety of thrift-store sweaters with sleeves so long that she cut holes in them for her thumbs. She didn't lecture. We all sat in a circle and discussed theater and critical theory. I was 18, and it was the first time in college I felt as if I was an adult. We were all equals in her class. I loved it.

I haven't thought much about that early experience until recently.

I never wanted to be an instructor. I wasn't one of those kids who played "school"; I never dreamed about sweater vests with red apple and yellow ruler patches. I wanted to be an actress, an artist, a writer. But somehow, I wandered back into grad school. Becoming an English 1157 instructor at UNO became my number one goal.

I felt terrified as I sat in TA training and listened to all the time-honored, hard-earned

advice: dress professionally, Miss Rostedt; don't tell the students you are a new teacher, Miss Rostedt; assert your authority through title, Miss Rostedt. I pored over my lesson planning as if my mentors Ali Arnold or Kim Martin might appear behind me at any second to give me a pop quiz on my learning objectives, my time management, my pedagogical stance. I was going to be

I never wanted to be an instructor. I wasn't one of those kids who played "school"; I never dreamed about sweater vests with red apple and yellow ruler patches.

everything I thought an instructor should be. I was going to make everyone so proud.

And I tried. I tried so hard. But I couldn't do it. The first day of class, I stood in front of my students shaking, reading out the exhaustive English 1157 syllabus as I thought a stern young instructor should. But that wasn't me. I would leave class heartbroken those early days, wanting so badly for my students to enjoy our time together. Why? Because I love writing! Writing is FUN! I wanted to share my love of writing with my students. I wanted to share my love of college with my students. And it just wasn't working.

Whenever a group activity or plan I had didn't work, I would cry in my car on the way home. This was not fun. This was not me at all.

Somehow, I'd created this ideal professor in my head, and I just was not measuring up. I was trying and failing to create a persona that was more professional and stiff than I could ever be. And my students—thank goodness—saw right through me. They are so smart.

Now?

I'm Miss Erica. Sometimes, just Erica. And I looooooove being Erica. I draw silly doodles on the board, attempt bad tap dancing, tell cheesy jokes, and sometimes—

word.

Scandinavians (and others) at UNO....

From elsewhere, Australian Keith Hill is finishing the program while teaching at a middle school in the region. Coleen Maidlow, who finished a thesis on Joan Didion with Carl Malmgren last fall, hails from Canada, while Arifah Lightburn (just finished) came to UNO from Belize. Chrissy Kalivitis, in mid-program, comes originally from Greece.

One day a couple of years back, a fair-haired fellow knocked at my office door. He was from Norway, and was here teaching German on an NEH Fellowship, but had decided (since he was here anyway) to get an MA in English. He said he'd like to take classical rhetoric from me—he'd seen that I sometimes taught that subject.

Christian Carlsen was a most assiduous and alert student. While we read from Cicero, Quintilian and other rhetoricians, at his request we also glanced at some expert Renaissance speakers (Satan and Falstaff, among them). When I asked Christian to do one of the rhetorical "elementary exercises," he responded with a prosopopoeia or impersonation of what Falstaff might have said to Prince Hal from his deathbed—in iambic pentameter.

The editors of *Ellipsis* are proud to announce the publication of our fortieth issue.

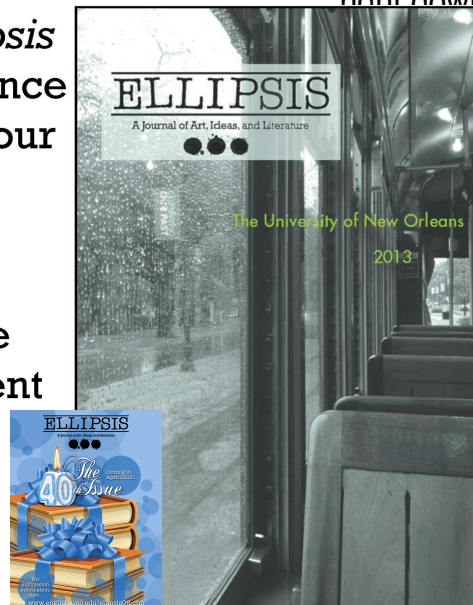
Copies may be purchased in the English Department office.

\$10.00

So much for current (or very recent) MAs, but as most of you know, the inimitable Inge Fink was originally a UNO student from Austria. She got an MA here and stayed to become a retained instructor and to direct UNO's Writing Center ("We will pump you up!" she promises students).

Also, should you wander into the main department spaces, you might hear English spoken with a (slight) British accent—for Trisha Rezende is the Coordinator Associate of Freshman English. She grew up in Trinidad, and drew our attention while she earned an MFA from Rick Barton and company.

Finally, since the Master of Fine Arts degree is shared by English as well as Film, Theatre and Communication Arts and, moreover, is right down the hall, one should mention that from Australia, Canada, Italy, Korea and Asia have been studying in that fine program. This coming summer, many maybe a few MA students will be in the UNO Writing Workshops in Ireland. UNO creative writing workshops have been held overseas each year for almost 20 years; this is the first time workshops will be held in Ireland.



Poetry at the Sandbar

By RILEY BINGHAM

If you are a fan of poetry, the chances are good that you aren't averse to a moderate glass of alcohol now and then. Welcome to Poetry at the Sandbar. This is UNO's primary series of poetry readings. It takes place at—duh—the Sandbar, campus's resident bar and grill. Sponsored by UNO's Creative Writing Workshop and offering a healthy, possibly habit forming, diet of readers, this series is an important facet of UNO's creative writing community and a vital part of UNO's English Department.

The readings are usually evening affairs, but not always. The Poetry at the Sandbar's recent guest, Katherine Soniat, who teaches at UNC and is the author of six poetry collections, read at noon surrounded by a crescent of avid listeners while the lunchtime crowd murmured in the background. That's part of the charm of Poetry at the Sandbar; besides the talent the series brings to campus, the series draws in many unsuspecting listeners, purely by the bar's physical location in the newly-restored Cove, an area with relatively heavy student traffic thanks to a large outside patio and multiple dining options. It is not uncommon for casual Sandbar patrons to get caught up in the reading, to hear something new and, maybe, make new friends.

The spring semester featured four fantastic poets: Megan Burns, Kristin Robinson, Metta Sama, and Elana Bell. I encourage you to attend this event in the fall. You can have a drink, if you want. Or don't. Show up early to meet other like-minded folks. Or sit by yourself, tune your

word.

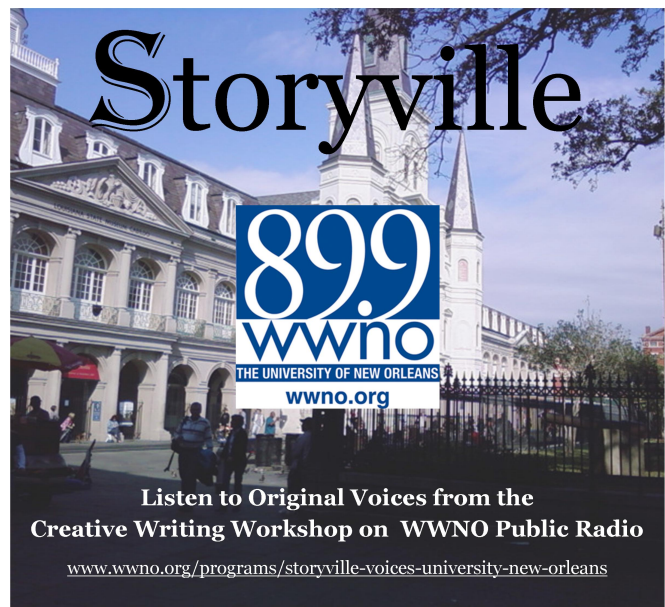
Speaking on Harry Potter

By CAROL ESHLEMAN

In May of 2007, as the Harry Potter community was feverishly awaiting the release of the seventh and final installment of the series, I was chosen to participate in a recorded discussion group for Borders with the members of Pottercast, a very popular podcast in the Potterverse. I put forward a theory concerning the twins in the series. Although it was met with incredulity, my prediction came true, and I began to wonder if I had spotted a larger symbolism in recognizing where Rowling's plot was headed.

I read the series again... and again... and again. I also dove into Greek mythology, numerology, and the wealth of Potter scholarship that poured forth once the

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Profile of an Undergraduate: Mark Folsie

by NORA STEIGER

On Mark's Wordpress, *Toulouse Street: Odd Bits of Life in New Orleans*, you will find not only shorter daily posts but also longer works of nonfiction, not to mention podcasts of readings and musical performances from around our city. His posts are also featured on *NolaVie: Life and Culture in New Orleans*, and you can see him for yourself on YouTube. Finally, check out what Mark's reading at GoodReads.com.



At a refined middle age, **Mark Folsie** sports a black beret and a tiny gray braid ornamented with an assortment of jingly-janglies. With his square shades and laid-back appearance, he looks the University part. If Mark were to enter a classroom with his bag and his laptop on the first day of class, no one would blink an eye until he passed by the podium to settle down in a chair alongside a sophomore in a Privateer hoodie.

Better known to the community as a New Orleans blogger, journalist, poet, and ex-campaign worker, Mark Folsie is a senior UNO English major.

He is classified as a non-traditional undergraduate student, which seems appropriate. He certainly doesn't fit the typical image of a "college senior." He's in his fifties, he's been in the workforce for thirty-plus years, and he's busy with putting two college-age kids of his own through school. But Mark's story is one of a true New Orleanian—a native who once left but who has chosen to return and who plans to remain. In many ways, Mark is the quintessential UNO student.

Born in New Orleans, he lived in areas ranging from the Lakefront and the 1300 block of Esplanade (before it was the fashionable and gentrifying area of the Treme), to Gentilly and Carrollton Avenue in mid-city. In the late 70s, when the university was still young, he enrolled as an English major, though he had considered Tulane and Loyola as well. "I didn't think the value was in the name or the ranking in *US News and World Report*," he reflects. "The value was in what you got out of your education and what you were going to do with it afterward." Mark says he was inspired by his professors at UNO; he entered professional

In the early 80s, he was offered a job in Washington, D.C. The position was alluring enough to convince him to accept and leave New Orleans before his degree was finished. He lived and worked in D.C. for the next ten years, writing and working on John Breaux's senatorial campaign in 1986, among many other things.

After D.C., Mark moved to Fargo, North Dakota (of Cohen brothers movie fame), following his spouse's wish to be closer to her family there. They stayed for another decade or so. Then Katrina hit New Orleans and Mark began blogging.

He had been trying to find a way to move back home anyway, he says, when he started getting involved in post-storm activities from afar. Beginning a blog called *The Wet Bank Guide*, he joined others in the community in sharing information on recovery happenings. There were voices in the city to be heard, stories to be shared, a community to be resurrected. He and his family decided to move back to New Orleans not long after the storm to take a more active part in everything.

Once home, Mark with others put together a small publishing house called Gallatin and Toulouse Press. Its publication of post-Katrina bloggings and writings, titled *A Howling in the Wires*, garnered a modest amount of attention from notables such as David Simon, creator of HBO programs *The Wire* and *Treme*. Simon reportedly gathered a lot of his background details about the city for *Treme* from the blogs of writers like Mark and the late Ashley Morris, upon whom John Goodman's character Creighton Bernette is based.

More recently, Mark has been operating a blog called *Toulouse Street: Odd Bits of Life from New Orleans*. *The Wet Bank Guide* had been a solemn and serious space for

community activism and a place to publish righteous outrage. But as Mark puts it, "At some point you have to stop being angry." Toulouse Street is about celebrating what Mark calls the "genie-soul of the place," quoting Walker Percy. "There's something here that's not in D.C., not in the Midwest, not elsewhere," notes Mark. "New Orleans encourages a Quixotic outlook on life." Toulouse Street helps capture some of that infatuating star-stuff, which is often found among the city's post-party debris. That star-stuff is precisely why Mark is so into the particular kind of creative nonfiction that his blogs present. In addition to the quirks of quotidian New Orleans life, in Toulouse Street you can also find an extensive listing of the city's current literary events.

Mark's decision to return to UNO after all these years was spurred largely by his desire to keep developing as a writer. He's excited about being back and sharpening his skills with the aid of fellow professionals. "After thirty years of reading widely and thinly as a journalist," he says, "it's good to get experience again reading and writing critically in a defensive way." Mark is currently the project manager for a bank, and between working full time, putting his two kids through college, and being an active member of the literary community, he's found it hard to devote all the time he'd like to his studies. But he's got dreams nevertheless. He wants to get Gallatin and Toulouse Press back up and running, and to collect some New Orleans-centric poetry by new local authors. "If I had all the time I wanted," he muses, "I'd love to study full-time and maybe start a magazine on the side. I think that's the direction I'd like to go in."

Because UNO honored his previous credit hours from the late 70s, he only has 12 hours left to complete his

GNOWP Update: WriteFest

By SARAH DeBACHER

The Greater New Orleans Writing Project (GNOWP) celebrated its 35th year at UNO with the launch of WriteFest—a conference for teachers in the New Orleans region on “best practices in writing instruction.” Nearly 150 educators, literary professionals, and school leaders attended the conference, which took place on January 26, 2013, at the Lindy Boggs International Conference Center.

Morning sessions led by Ali Arnold, Chair of the UNO Freshman Writing Program, and Dr. Pat Austin of the University’s College of Education immersed attendees in writing activities they could implement in classes across the curriculum. Jennifer Harris, who teaches at Holy Rosary Academy, led teachers in a workshop on writing in the math classroom, while Denise Hopkins, from Sylvanie Williams College Prep, presented a workshop on teaching satire through art. Amanda Baudot, an English teacher from Hahnville High and Louisiana’s 2013 High School Teacher of the Year, guided participants in fishbowl discussions of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

In the afternoon, keynote speaker Barry Lane, author of *But How Do You Teach Writing?*, kept participants writing via kernel essays, six-word memoirs, creative approaches to research projects, and song parodies.

Responses to the inaugural WriteFest have been really good: ninety-six percent of attendees reported that they would recommend WriteFest to a colleague, for instance. Peggy Armstrong, a lower school teacher at St. George’s Episcopal School, wrote, “I learned practical skills that I can take back to my classroom”—a sentiment echoed by dozens of other participants.

GNOWP is already planning WriteFest for 2014, when all K-12 schools across Louisiana must have fully implemented the Common Core State Standards. These standards call for much more writing and for greater textual complexity at earlier ages. The Greater New Orleans Writing Project at UNO will help schools move into the Common Core era with writing practices

Ready, Set, College: UNO’s College-readiness Outreach Project



In his book *The Transition to College Writing*,

Keith Hjortshoj, Director of Writing at Cornell University, suggests that successful high school students sometimes fail to earn good grades once they enter college because they lack a clear and accurate understanding of the expectations of their college instructors.

Likewise, college instructors often fail to communicate their expectations effectively because they lack a clear and accurate understanding of their students’ academic

backgrounds and experiences. This absence of understanding contributes to what Hjortshoj describes as a veil between high school and college, both for students and teachers. UNO’s college-readiness project, Ready, Set, College, lifts that veil.

Ready, Set, College allows high school and college faculty an opportunity to engage in a meaningful and ongoing dialogue about college-readiness, student achievement, and pedagogy. This kind of collaboration will help local educators ensure college success for high school graduates.

UNO MA Alum Honored by Teach for America

Teach for America in May announced that **Rhonda Kalifey-Aluise** had been selected as one of three educators to receive this year's Peter Jennings Award for Civic Leadership. This national award honors Teach for America alumni for their contributions to expanding educational opportunity. All three educators honored this year were from New Orleans.

Kalifey-Aluise joined Teach For America's Houston corps in 1992. In 2004, she joined the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) to launch the charter network's first school in New Orleans. Forced to relocate to Houston as a result of Hurricane Katrina, Rhonda helped enable KIPP's return to the Recovery District in the fall of 2006.

Today, the KIPP New Orleans network that Rhonda leads is the fastest growing network in the country: it consists of nine schools serving 2,450 mostly low-income students. KIPP New Orleans students have averaged two years of academic improvement for every one year of instruction.

Calling attention to the special role Rhonda has played in the progress of KIPP New Orleans, the Jennings Award statement notes that she has created "an incredibly strong program for special needs children" and "has gone to great lengths to develop the school-based supports necessary to retain some of the hardest-to-reach children in the city."

Kalifey-Aluise received her UNO MA in English in Spring 2002.

Amanda Baudot: The Best Teacher in Louisiana

Many of our current students and faculty will know **Amanda Baudot**, who teaches at Hahnville High and is a GNOWP teacher consultant. Amanda has been taking graduate courses for some three years, and she now has 27 hours toward her UNO MA in English. She is currently doing a thesis with Carl Malmgren.



Amanda was named "2013 Louisiana High School Teacher of the Year" this past summer. She received the honor during the Sixth Annual Cecil J. Picard Educator Excellence Symposium and Celebration in Baton Rouge.

Amanda has been teaching at Hahnville High since 2006. Her mother, Deborah Unger, also teaches English there, and Amanda is sure all her teaching instincts come from her mother. But she also attributes her success to her students: "I learn every day along with [them]. I admire their insights, feed off their energy, and enjoy their company."

Amanda received a BA from LSU in English and

Creative Writing in 2005.

“Action of Snatching”: A 19th Century Shakespeare Promptbook in Metairie

By CATHERINE LOOMIS

A visitor to Shakespeare’s London offered a strange report: in England, unlike in the rest of Europe, playwrights directed their own plays. William Shakespeare, as a playwright, an actor, and as part owner of the Globe theater, would have been on hand to explain to his star actor, Richard Burbage, how to dress, move, and speak like Hamlet, Othello, or King Lear. The actors who created the roles under Shakespeare’s supervision could then pass that information down to the next generation of performers, making it possible that some of Shakespeare’s original staging ideas are still in use.

Theater historians search for records of those original staging practices. One place to look is in copies of a play that have been annotated by an actor. The closer the actor is to Shakespeare’s own time, the stronger the possibility that the stage business is similar to what was used in early modern London. But even if the actor is quite far removed in time and place from Shakespeare’s Globe, the annotated play provides details about the work that actors do; about what an audience expected to see or could understand; about costumes, props, and scenery; and about how Shakespeare was brought to life for new viewers.

Several semesters ago, I had the great good fortune to be teaching a UNO student, Mary Catherine Pollard, who is a descendant of a great American Shakespearean, John Jack. Mary Catherine has since graduated and now is a special education teacher at St. John High School. Her great-great grandfather John Jack, who lived from 1836 to 1913, specialized in the role of John Falstaff, Shakespeare’s hilarious old, fat man who steals the audience’s hearts away from

the royal characters in both parts of Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*. John Jack learned the role from the first great American Falstaff, James Hackett.

One day after class, Mary Catherine brought me a family scrapbook containing theater programs from the 1870s that documented the career of Rosalie Jack, John Jack’s



Above, Duncan Goldthwaite’s family archive.

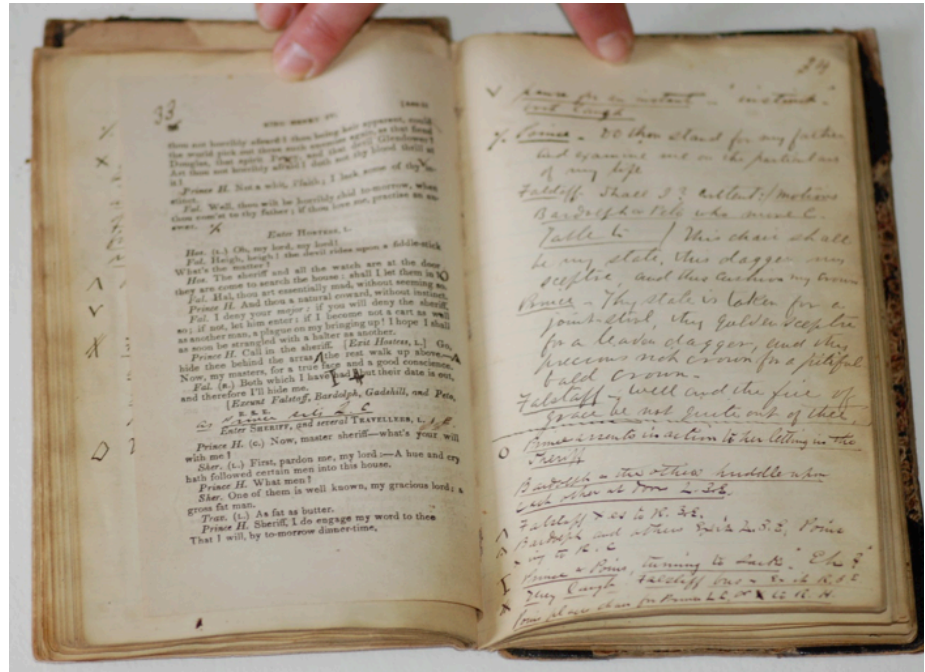
daughter and Mary Catherine’s great-grandmother. Mary Catherine invited me to visit her parents’ home in Metairie because they had a few items that belonged to John Jack, and they thought I might like to see them.

In addition to scrapbooks and photo albums, Mary Catherine’s father, the retired petroleum geologist Duncan Goldthwaite, has books that belonged to John Jack. Among them is a copy of the first part of Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*. This is a 19th century acting edition of the play published by Samuel French and containing detailed handwritten notes by John Jack for an 1884 performance. Two other copies of the play with John Jack’s notes exist, and both are

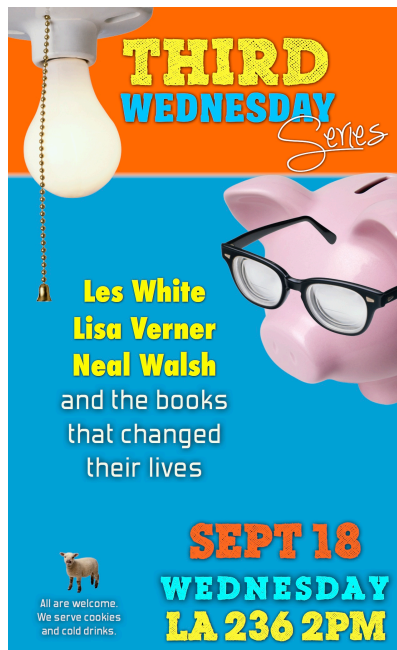
and furiously” or to perform the “action of snatching.” Falstaff’s unscripted mock swordfight with Prince Hal is documented as a moment when the actor breaks the theater’s invisible “fourth wall”: after stabbing the already-dead rebel Hotspur, Falstaff picks up Hotspur’s body. In John Jack’s interpretation of the role, though, “when Falstaff has Hotspur’s head over his shoulder, he looks at audience.”

These notes provide us with a way to see a production of the play that happened long before it could be recorded on film, and help us recover staging practices John Jack inherited from a line of actors stretching back to the play’s earliest performances.

While on sabbatical this year, Dr. Loomis studied John Jack’s promptbook. Last October, she gave a talk on this subject at the annual meeting of the Louisiana Consortium of Medieval and Renaissance Scholars.



A page from John Jack’s copy of 1 Henry IV showing the inserted notes. Photograph by Mary Catherine Pollard.



Our next Third Wednesday is October 16 at 2pm in LA 236. We serve cookies and cold drinks. You should come.

Third Wednesday: A Discussion Series

On the **Third Wednesday** of every month at 2 PM, students, faculty, alumni, and community members gather at the Third Wednesday Discussion Series to hear writers, editors, and professors discuss topics related to the reading and writing life. Students get the opportunity not only to listen to people passionate about writing and literature, they also get to ask questions and become part of the discussion. Recent topics have included “The Book That Changed My Life,” “Writing for Your Life,” and “NOLA Lit.”

In April, our Third Wednesday panel featured (L-R) undergraduates **Becky Retz, Sean Olsen, and Lauren Walter**, who inspired



Warrior-Child of the Rock: Researching the Exploits of Ejibausi, a Yoruba Epic Hero

By NIYI OSUNDARE



One of my major on-going research projects focuses on the Epic of Ejibausi in Ikere-Ekiti, my hometown in Western Nigeria. The Ejibausi story is one I have been hearing since my childhood days, a

story I have always wanted to investigate further and document in black and white. Indeed, one of my early verses as a fledgling poet some forty years ago was on this titanic figure, but I knew even at that time that I needed more maturity in craft and experience and more extensive research to be able to do justice to a poetic narrative of Ejibausi's exploits. For, to borrow an Ikere idiom, Ejibausi is a mighty elephant that defies a cursory glance.

Part-god, part-human, part-warrior, part-farmer, demiurge and moral crusader, Ejibausi is believed to have been sent by Olosunta, Ikere's Supreme Deity and Guardian of the Harvest Spirit, whose abode is the Rockhill that towers above the town, and in whose shadow the people live and strive. His mission: to liberate his people from invaders and secure their faith for all time in this deliverer from the belly of the rock. All this is believed to have happened in the era of intra-ethnic wars in Yorubaland, when Ikere was under assault by powerful neighbors, and her fertile land became an object of envy. In battle after battle, the town emerged victorious through the mysterious powers of the all-conquering but unconquerable warrior.

The Ejibausi epic is a fascinating mix of myth, history, and literature which looms

large in Ikere's communal imagination and memory. Its narrative is as stunning as the poetry and songs that go with it. I have been hearing these stories and songs for a very long time, and have always found their lyrical and dramatic features haunting and timeless. But like many other aspects of the people's oral memory, the Ejibausi Epic is fast receding into oblivion as the old people who know it are aging and dying, and the younger generation considers it remote from their cyber-age contemplation and irrelevant to their modern-day aspirations. Islam and Christianity are also doing their holiest best to ensure the extermination of this "pagan" myth.

My research into the Ejibausi epic has brought home to me the ambivalent power of memory and remembrance. For, while a certain body of core facts exist regarding the epic hero, there are interesting variations on the circumstances surrounding his birth, the rapidity of his maturation and attainment of adulthood, his military prowess and campaigns, the nature and extent of his military conquests, and the manner of his eventual "disappearance" (for he never died a natural death). There is enough elasticity in this narrative to teach the researcher the humility to regard his own account as just one of several possible versions of a communally stored and seamlessly recounted story. The more versions of the epic I hear, the more fascinatingly complex the narrative becomes.

As a scholar and creative writer, I am constantly fascinated by the impact of ancient myths and legends on contemporary literature and its linguistic figurations. In the past 30 years, my academic and pedagogical preoccupations have involved issues such as the orature-literature continuum; mythopoesis; the mythic imagination; literature and the once-upon-a-

Remembering Slash Pine

By CAROLYN HEMBREE

Slash Pine Press is a University of Alabama “undergraduate initiative in immersion learning and community arts” (*i.e.*, they get funding to hang out, stitch cool books, plan readings, and write stuff). Annually, the Slash Pine Press faculty advisor and interns wrangle an exchange with another university. Last fall, UNO was asked to participate. So, we went to Tuscaloosa, and they came to New Orleans, as the official contract stated, “for the purpose of building a creative community: writing together, designing books, exploring art venues, and experiencing the vital DIY arts culture that flourishes in today’s small press environment.”

On Thursday, October 11, 2012, five UNO creative writers—Riley Bingham, Mackenzie “Max” Guillory, Monica Linam, Alex Munster, and Lauren Walter—piled into Bingham’s four-door. The car blew a tire outside the Alabama state line, so they walked the I-20/59, got the car towed, and were rescued by the Slash Pine faculty advisor, Joseph P. Wood. By the time I made it to “T-town” the next day, I expected some pretty bummed-out UNO students. What I found: blissed-out students who had pulled an all-nighter stitching anthologies with the Slash Pine interns.

That fall weekend was dreamy, a complete immersion in the Southern literary scene: Jeanie Thompson, founder of *Black Warrior Review*, chatted over a cold one about the legendary lit mag’s beginnings; our students gave readings alongside luminaries like Bruce Covey, Mark Yakich, and Cindy St. John; we dined; we went on a writing field trip to a local arboretum. Of the experience, one UNO student said, “It was invaluable to mingle with another school of writers—not only to understand the different ways they approach the craft, but to get, for myself, a sense of how deep, and able, the writing community across the country could be.”

On October 25, the Slash Pine interns came to us, to UNO, to the greatest city in the universe. Yeah, it conflicted with Voodoo Fest—so what? We had something better: Trisha Rezende’s Halloween party. A party you earn the right to attend. At my behest, the Alabama students created a “hellcat catalogue” of observations during their trip. Once they arrived, we walked the Quarter; we wrote in Jackson Square; we went to Faulkner House Books; I read at The Diane Tapes Reading Series at the Maple Street Book Shop in Bayou St. John; we rode the streetcar; we rode the Algiers Ferry; we wrote in Algiers; we read to each other on the ferry. In short, we created a writing community. We bonded hardcore.

Of these experiences, one Alabama student wrote, “Visiting New Orleans was the most emotionally exhausting trip I have ever been on. I have never felt so much in my life, and my writing benefitted from that.” Another wrote, “Our most recent trip to UNO made me come alive as both a writer and a person. It perfectly blended both worlds, and, as corny as it may sound, I was left with an overwhelming feeling of love. Love for New Orleans, a city to which I had never been, love for my home in Tuscaloosa, love



News & Noteworthy: Alumni, Faculty, & Students

Alumni

Eddie Ardeneaux (BA, 2004) was awarded a fellowship from the University of Arkansas to pursue a PhD in the 20th century novel and speculative fiction.

Angela Breckenridge (MA, 1994) serves as the Director of Faculty and Staff Development at Delgado Community College and has a PhD in Human and Organization Development from Fielding Graduate University in Santa Barbara, CA.

Jennifer Drouant (MA, 2001) is the chair of the English Department at St. Mary's Dominican High School.

Steven Dwyer (MA, 1972), of Dwyer, Cambre & Suffern, practices law dealing with business transitions, litigation, and commercial real estate, while also serving as a member of the Board of Governors of the Louisiana State Bar Association. He's also a member of the Adjunct Faculty at the Loyola Law School.

Rich Goode (MA 2013) presented condensed versions of his MA thesis "'Little Things': Chekhov's Children and Discourse in the Comic Short Story" at two recent conferences. Last October, he presented at the International Organization of Social Sciences and Behavioral Research (IOSSBR) conference, an interdisciplinary studies conference where his was the only literary paper. In March, he presented it to the University of North Alabama's annual grad conference, which was on humor this year and was exclusively literary.

Elton Glaser (BA, 1967) is a Distinguished Professor of English Emeritus at the University of Akron, and has six full-length collections of poetry, including *Here and Here After* (University of Akron Press, 2005).

Lucille Fortier Griffin (BA, 1988) earned her UNO degree at the age of 48. After a career as a technical writing consultant, she formed her own company, Documentation Plus, specializing in computer documentation, writing computer manuals and creating online help for business users. Since retiring, she has

continued to use her technical writing skills in volunteer activities.

Louise Kaltenbaugh (BA, 1968) is currently the Interim Dean and Associate Professor in the College of Education and Human Development at SUNO.

Bill Loehfelm (MA, 2005) released his newest novel, *The Devil in Her Way* on April 30, 2013, from Sarah Crichton Books. He also has a short story, "Snake Hill," in the new anthology *Staten Island Noir*.

Lauren Peralta (BA, 2011) published a science fiction novel this year: *The Elementals (Volume One)*, the first in a planned trilogy.

Mark Petrie (MA, 2012) won first prize in the Erasure Poetry Contest for the Canadian magazine *Geist*.

David Racker (MA, 1993) is currently Assistant Professor of Intellectual Heritage at Temple University.

Terri Sercovich (BA, 2003) is the Managing Editor for the *Plaquemines Gazette*.

Matthew Sutton (BA, 2001) was admitted to the Louisiana Bar in 2005 and currently works as a trial attorney with Edward Womac, Jr. & Associates.

Todd Thaxton (MA, 2011) co-founded the *New Orleans Street Exchange*, a publication concerned with and sold by homeless and low-income residents of New Orleans. More information can be found at nolastreet.org.

Sheba Turk (BA, 2011) currently works as reporter for the Eyewitness Morning News on WWL.

Terri Sercovich (BA, 2003) is the Managing Editor for the *Plaquemines Gazette*.

Lauren Walter (BA 2013) participated in InnovateUNO, where she read dramatic monologues; she also spoke at the April 29th "Third Wednesday" on the subject of intellectual curiosity.

Nancy Easterlin's essay, "From Reproductive Resource to Autonomous Individuality? Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*" will appear in *Evolution's*

Empress: Darwinian Perspectives on the Nature of Women (Oxford University Press, 2013). Last fall, "Aesthetics and Ideology in Felicia Hemans's *The Forest Sanctuary: A Biocultural Perspective*" was published in the literary journal *Style*. "Novelty, Canonicity, and Competing Simulations in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*" is forthcoming in *Neuroscience, Literature, and History*. Nancy is also writing two invited essays: "Novelty in Cognition and Literature," forthcoming in the *Oxford Handbook on Cognitive Cultural Studies*, and an essay for *New Literary History*. This summer, she will write an essay adopting a Darwinian feminist perspective on Keats's *Lamia* for an anthology on cognitive-evolutionary approaches to 19c literature. Additionally, she is guest editor of a special issue of *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, titled "Cognition in the Classroom." Nancy continues to serve on the Executive Committee of the International Society for the Study of Narrative. She has been nominated for a second term on the Executive Committee of the MLA's Division on Cognitive Approaches to Literature.

John Gery's new collection of poems, *Lure/Mamac*, was published in Serbia in July. He also has new poems in the current issues of *New Orleans Review* and *New South*, and his poem, "Descant on Pennsylvania," is forthcoming in the Philadelphia journal, *Apiary*. John's essay, "'Scaled Invention or True Artistry': Davie's Pound and Pound's Davie," has been accepted for a collection of essays on Ezra Pound and London. In June John received an Artist Career Advancement Grant from the Louisiana Division of the Arts to travel to Siena, Italy, to trace the footsteps of Ezra Pound, study Siennese art and architecture, and compose new poems. In November, he chaired the special session, "The Sweet Allure of Death in Contemporary American Poetry," at the annual SCMLA meeting in San Antonio, where he delivered his paper, "The 'Privilege' of Dying in the Poems of Robert Hass."

Daniel Gonzalez presented his paper "Nashe and the 'Novel': The Fortunate

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Faculty

River Teeth. Another essay, "Penelope Joins the Writers' Group," will appear in the Spring 2013 edition of *Chautauqua*.

Carolyn Hembree facilitated the 2012 Slash Pine Poetry Exchange between the University of New Orleans and the University of Alabama. In September, Kore Press published Carolyn Hembree's debut poetry collection, *Skinny* (Kore Press, 2012). The book has been nominated for a Norma Farber First Book Award, and a single poem from the collection was nominated for the Pushcart Prize. The collection was also featured on *Verse Daily*, an online anthology. During the spring semester, she read for the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (with a Book Fair signing), the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, the University of South Florida, and Tulane University. Her poems and prose appear in current or forthcoming issues of *Bateau*, *Drunken Boat*, and *The Volta*. Carolyn's poems have also been selected for inclusion in the forthcoming anthologies *The Gulf Stream: Poems of the Gulf Coast* and *Hick Poetics*.

Barb Johnson's short story, "Rider," was published in *Yemassee* 20.1. She is participating in "The National Book Awards, Revisited," an editorial project of *The Southern Review*. One of five writers chosen for the project, she will review the books published in 1962 and choose an alternate set of National Book Award nominees and, ultimately, a new winner.

Catherine Loomis's essay "Bear your body more seeming": Open-Kneed

Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I" will appear in the forthcoming collection *The Emblematic Queen: Extra-Literary Representations of Early Modern Queenship* (Palgrave Macmillan). The Shakespeare Association of America has asked Catherine to serve as chair of local arrangements for their 2016 conference, which will be held in New Orleans; that year marks the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death.

Carl Malmgren reviewed a book manuscript for the Austrian Science Foundation last spring. He has been asked to review a book manuscript on narrative theory for Routledge and to contribute an essay to an anthology on Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game*, which is scheduled for publication next November (when the movie based on the novel premieres).

Niyi Osundare has eight poems in the new *Norton Anthology of World Literature, 1650 to the Present*. He is the only African poet represented in this anthology. He has also recently published two poems: "Iwa L'Ewa (Character Is Beauty)" and "For Ayo Bamgbose," a poem in honor of Professor Bamgbose. Niyi delivered the keynote lecture in April at the Symposium on Modernity, Culture, and the State in Postcolonial Africa, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Osundare has also learned that the Association of Faculty of Arts Students (AFAS) at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, has chosen to name an inter-university academic competition (involving all the universities in the southwestern region of Nigeria) after him.

Zhaoming Qian has a new edited book out from UNO Press, a volume in John Gery's Ezra Pound Center for Literature Studies Series, titled *Modernism and the Orient*. Contributors to this collection include Daniel Albright of Harvard, Ronald Bush of Oxford, Ira Nadel of UBC, Canada, Sabine Sielke of Bonn, and other internationally known scholars.

Ken Rayes contributed his annual top ten music list to the 2012 *The Village Voice* annual "Pazz and Jop" poll of music critics. Lists from 2008-2012 can be found at the Village Voice website. This summer Ken will present a paper, titled "A Case Study of the Effect of Sign Translators in a Writing Intensive Course" at the International TRAC Conference on Disabilities in Higher Education in Innsbruck, Austria.

Shelby Richardson presented her paper, "Bewitched: Fletcher and Massinger's 'The Prophetess' as Theatrical Defense" at Tulane's Louisiana Consortium for Medieval and Renaissance Scholars this October. She also had two seminar papers accepted at this year's Northeastern Modern Language Association conference: "Blood on his Hands: Scenes of Writing in Shakespeare" and "Prophetic Skepticism: Fletcher and Massinger's 'The Prophetess.'"

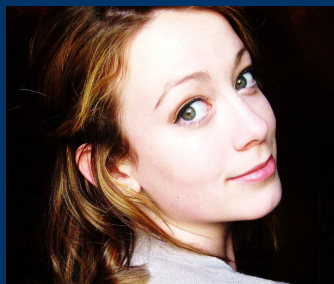
Bob Shenk's book, *America's Black Sea Fleet: The U.S. Navy Amidst War and Revolution*, was published by the Naval Institute Press in 2012. Bob happened upon this topic while co-authoring a biography of a naval officer who also wrote fiction (Admiral Dan

Major Notes

The English Club is a student-run organization that welcomes the participation of all English majors. The English Club sponsors literary events, including readings and workshops featuring local and national writers. Want to be involved? Contact President Max Guillory, hang out at the English Clubhouse (LA 304), or stop by the English Department (LA 201).



Ryan Bonfanti, Cyndle Valdivia, Gary Cruice, Ivy Anweiler, Jenn Gaudet, and Ryan Dennington.



Major Spotlight

Hannah Marcotte is an Orientation Leader, an officer in Delta Epsilon chapter of Alpha Xi Delta, an RA in our dorms, and a member of honor society Alpha Lambda Delta. She is involved with fundraising efforts around the community, including Autism Speaks, an expanding organization dedicated to increasing awareness of autism. Lucky for us, she is also an English major.

at the Library of Congress and National Archives. An excerpt from the book appeared in *Naval History* magazine this February.

M.O. Walsh's short story "The Freddie's" was adapted as a short film of the same name, which premiered at the Louisiana Book Festival on October 27th. Walsh's adaptation won the Louisiana Arts and Film Commission's Screenwriting Award and will show at other film festivals over the next year. It will also be available for DVD purchase next year.

Students

Desiree Bewley won InnovateUNO in the literary category and is one of the recipients of the Ryan Chighizola Prize for poetry. Recently, she performed her poetry at Plymouth State, Dartmouth

College, University of North Carolina, University of Texas at Dallas, and in Richmond, Virginia. This summer, she'll teach creative writing at the High School Arts Institute in Napa, California.

Alex Jennings read nonfiction at an April storytelling showcase called "Shipwrecked at The New Movement Theater." In May, his short story collection, *Here I Come and Other Stories*, was released by Fight On Publications and Golden Dawn Books; he also read at WisCon, the annual feminist science fiction convention.

Karen Jensen presented a paper at the April 2013 Coastal Plains Graduate Conference on Language and Literature at the University of Houston titled "Emily Melville's Revolt: Oppression, Revolution and Feminism in William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*."

Hannah Marcotte, English major and UNO Orientation Leader, went to the Southern Regional Orientation Workshop in Memphis, TN, in March. The OLs won first place in the skit competition, with their take on *The Lion King* (in which Hannah played Nala).

Lauren Noel works as a Marketing Associate at the Historic New Orleans Collection, writing press releases, ad copy, and brochures.

Brandon Rizzuto was recently hired by UNO's Department of Athletics as the Assistant Athletic Director for External Relations. He oversees the department's advancement of marketing and promotions, media relations, social media, ticket operations and multi-media. As a UNO undergraduate, Brandon's first internship was with the Athletic Department, and he views this recent

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

I became acquainted with the writings of John Granger, whom *Time* hailed as "the dean of Harry Potter studies." Following his blog, I saw a call for papers for the first ever academic Potter conference in the UK, which would be held at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. On Mugglenet, a popular Potter fan site, I also saw a call for papers for a large Potter convention in Orlando. I worked up an abstract and submitted it to both conferences, and it was accepted at both.

I continued to refine my research and in May of 2012, I took an eleven o'clock train from King's Cross Station in London to St. Andrews, Scotland. To use the term "magical" may seem corny, but there really is no better adjective in this case. Sixty scholars from all corners of the globe met for two days to discuss every literary aspect of Harry Potter imaginable, and I was extremely pleased with the enthusiastic reception of my own research. Newspapers in the UK and the US published numerous articles concerning this conference, including the *Daily Mail* and *The Huffington Post*. Some of these articles debated whether or not Harry Potter should be taken seriously as a subject of academic study, using many of the same tired arguments that were thrown at writers such as Dickens and Shakespeare – basically, that the work was simply a fad.

More articles were written to refute the negative press, and many attendees of the conference and myself were quite pleased. We felt that the newspapers' desire to publish any articles concerning Potter scholarship was proof of interest in Potter academics.

Attending the Harry Potter convention in Orlando in July of 2012 was an altogether different experience. The Orlando convention had over a thousand attendees. I was concerned that presenting my paper while Chris Rankin was also speaking (he played Percy Weasley in the film adaptations) would mean that attendance would be low for me. However, I was pleasantly surprised by a packed room of about seventy, who also gave my work a very warm reception despite the fact that this time, by convention format, I spoke for an hour. (Also by convention format, each of us spoke dressed in our favorite Potter character.)

Overall, I had a wonderful time diving into Potter on my own, but now, having just entered the

Guilty reads

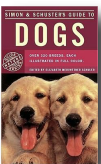


Allison Lowe reveals, “My perfect guilty pleasure book is *Night Jasmine* by Mary Lou Widmer. I first came across it when I was fourteen and absolutely believed in the power of romantic love to heal all

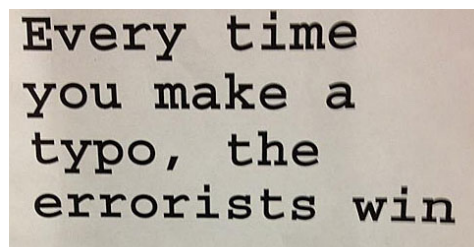
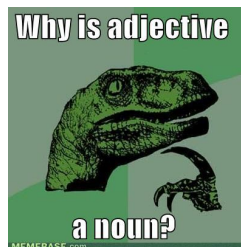
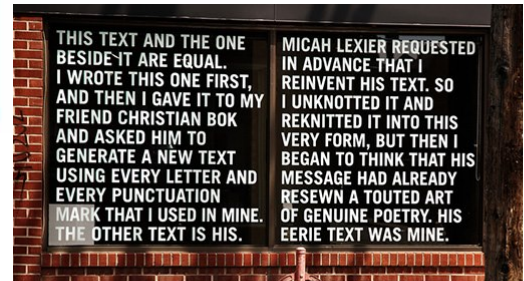
ills. Katherine Raspanti is a young, beautiful daughter of poor Italian immigrants trying to forge a life in



New Orleans. When she is hired by the wealthy Eagan family to work as their maid and cook on St. Charles Avenue, she doesn't expect to heat up anything more than the kitchen. Romance, tragedy, and a happy ending ensue and fourteen-year-old girls everywhere swoon.”



Catherine Loomis admits, “My guilty pleasure is Alice LaPlante’s mystery novel *Turn of Mind*. Although the mystery part is great (an orthopedic surgeon with Alzheimer’s is accused of murdering her best friend), my greatest guilty pleasure was the subtle-but-snarky account of the narrator’s daughter’s



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